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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/937,220	09/24/2001	Akihiro Goto	Q65416	6650

7590

04/22/2002

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EXAMINER

EVANS, GEOFFREY S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1725

DATE MAILED: 04/22/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/937,220

Applicant(s)

GOTO ET AL.

Examiner

Geoffrey S Evans

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 February 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Magara et al. in U.S. Patent No. 5,434,380. Magara et al. discloses a power unit for electric discharge unit (see figure 6) for supplying pulses to the gap with a first pulse width section and first peak value section and also a second pulse width section and a second peak value section (see figure 16(b)) that meets the equation ($2 \leq k \leq n$) by satisfying the equation $2=k=n$. Since during the first pulse width section less emission of the electrode occurs, inherently this can be considered to suppress the emission of electrode material. It is also inherent in an electric discharge process that a diameter of an electric discharge arc column is extended.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Magara et al. in U.S. Patent No. 5,434,380 in view of Graell in U.S. Patent No. 5,187,341. Magara in figure 16(b) has a pulse width with two pulse width sections with different current levels for electric discharge surface treatment. Magara et al. does not disclose an n-th pulse width where $n > k$, when $k=2$. Since during the first pulse width section less emission of the electrode occurs, this can be considered to suppress the emission of electrode material. It is inherent in an electric discharge process that a diameter of an electric discharge arc column is extended. Graell teaches as shown in figure 10 that the number of pulse width sections with differing current levels can exceed 2 for normal discharge machining in order to reduce electrode wear. It would have been obvious to adapt Magara et al. in view of Graell to provide an electric discharge current pulse with more than two width sections of different current levels to reduce electrode wear during the discharge coating process.

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6. Applicant's arguments filed February 11, 2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Magara et al. does not suppress emission of electrode material during the first pulse width and does not have the diameter of the electric discharge arc column extend during the first pulse width. However since Magara et al. (380) uses less current flow during the first pulse width as contrasted with the second pulse width there is less emission of electrode material so that "suppression" occurs. The increase of the diameter of the electric discharge current during the first part of a discharge is inherent. See for example in Figure 4 on page 17 of the article "The BASICS: Technological Aspects of Spark Erosion" (which is not being applied as a reference against the claims) which shows the increase in diameter of the arc column when the discharge first starts. Consequently the feature of the arc discharge column expanding is merely a law of nature. See EMI Group North America Inc. v. Cypress Semiconductor Corp., 60 USPQ 1423,1430 (CAFC 2001) which states "Recitation of a law of nature does not distinguish a claim from prior art. Funk Bros. Seed Co. v. Kalo Inoculant Co., 333 U.S. 127,130 (1948) ("[M]anifestations of laws of nature [are] free to all men and reserved exclusively to none. He who discovers a hitherto unknown phenomenon of nature has no claim to monopoly of it which the law recognizes.")".

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The article "The BASICS: Technological Aspects of Spark Erosion", pages 16-19,22-25 and 36 of July/August 1984, Volume VI, Number 4 of EDM DIGEST magazine shows the expansion of the arc column when the discharge starts.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Geoffrey S Evans whose telephone number is (703)-308-1653. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 6:30AM to 4:00 PM, alternate Fridays off.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Dunn can be reached on (703)-308-3318. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)-305-7718 for regular communications and (703)-305-5585 for After Final communications.

Application/Control Number: ***

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)-308-0661.


Geoffrey S Evans
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1725

GSE
April 18, 2002